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Army halt on spying 'ignored'

By John Linstead

A former Army intelligence agent testified in U.S. District Court here that Army surveillance of civilians continued after it was ordered stopped last June.

John M. O'Brien, 26, who said he served as an investigator for the 113th Military Intelligence Group here from June, 1969, to June, 1970, said he was told the intelligence activity "had declined greatly" after the Army order, but "was still taking place."

O'Brien testified Monday before U.S. District Judge Richard B. Austin in a hearing on a suit brought by the American Civil Liberties Union against high ranking Army officers, including Gen. William C. Westmoreland, Army chief of staff.

The hearing was on a motion for a preliminary injunction to force the Army to stop the surveillance.

O'BRIEN SAID he learned the surveillance was continuing when he visited his former duty station at Region 1 Headquarters of the 113th in Evanston in September and talked to his former superior, Thomas Filkins, a civilian employee and former Army intelligence officer.

The Army, according to O'Brien, carried on investigations of U.S. Sen. Adlai Stevenson (D-Ill.). Others he named as surveillance targets include the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, national director of Operation Breadbasket; Rep. Abner Mikva (D-Ill.); Judge Otto Kerner of the U.S. Court of Appeals, and two Chicago aldermen.

EARLIER, Col. Joseph

Walker Jr., commander of the 113th, testified that the June 9, 1970, order restricted surveillance of civilians to organizations and individuals who posed a direct threat to the Army.

UNDER questioning by attorney Alexander Polikoff, Walker said he had "no knowledge of any covert surveillance" against civilians. "I don't believe there was any."

The use of covert surveillance — the gathering of information by undercover methods — was banned by a directive from Army Undersecretary David E. McGiffert in February, 1969.

O'BRIEN TESTIFIED that seven months later, Gen. William H. Blakefield, commanding general of Army intelligence, visited the 113th and told intelligence officers they would "become more aggressive and involved."

O'Brien also testified that he had two conversations in the summer of 1969 with Walker about an undercover agent who had infiltrated a peace group and that Walker ordered that the agent attend an antiwar conference outside Illinois.